

NASOPHARYNGEAL SPECIMEN COLLECTION FOR VIRAL RESPIRATORY PATHOGENS

A Guide For Providers

USE MASK, GLOVES, AND EYE PROTECTION

NASOPHARYNGEAL ASPIRATE METHOD (PREFERRED)

Materials:

- Suction apparatus (Luken’s trap, syringe, or bulb)
- Sterile suction catheter (e.g., #8 French)
- Sterile saline
- Viral transport medium tube

1. Attach catheter to suction apparatus.
2. Instill several drops of sterile saline into each nostril.
3. Place catheter through nostril to posterior nasopharynx (same distance as from nostrils to external opening of ear).
4. Apply gentle suction. Using rotating motion, slowly withdraw catheter.
5. For an optimal sample, repeat procedure using other nostril.
6. With the viral transport medium, rinse secretions through the catheter into the collection container.

NASOPHARYNGEAL SWAB METHOD

Materials:

- Nasopharyngeal swab (flexible shaft) with rayon tip
- Viral transport medium tube

1. Bend shaft to follow curve of nasopharynx.
2. Insert swab through nostril to posterior nasopharynx (same distance as from nostrils to external opening of ear).
3. Rotate swab a few times to obtain infected cells.
4. For an optimal sample, repeat procedure using other nostril.
5. Place swab in transport medium.
6. Bend or cut shaft to completely seal transport tube.

TRANSPORT & STORAGE

1. Send specimen to lab immediately (testing sensitivity decreases over time).
2. Cool specimen to 2° - 4°C (36° - 40°F) during storage and transport.

Incline patient’s head as shown.

